

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1607

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to resident tuition rates for American Indian students.

Brief Description: Including members of the Samish Indian Nation for purposes of resident tuition.

Sponsors: Representatives Strow, Kenney, Walsh, McCoy, Ormsby, Murray, Chase, Dickerson, Hasegawa, Roberts, Santos and Hudgins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/11/05, 2/18/05 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- For purposes of qualifying for resident tuition rates, includes members of the Samish Indian Nation and Cowlitz Tribe with members of other Native American tribes whose traditional tribal boundaries are in Washington.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Rodne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buri, Dunn, Fromhold, Jarrett, Ormsby, Priest, Roberts and Sommers.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

State laws define a number of criteria for determining residency for purposes of paying resident tuition rates at public institutions of higher education. The primary criterion is that the student, or his or her family if the student is a dependent, must have a bona fide domicile in Washington for at least one year prior to the academic year in which the student wishes to enroll.

Native American students can qualify for resident tuition if they were a resident of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, or Washington during the prior year, and if they are a member of an American Indian tribe whose traditional and customary tribal boundaries included portions of Washington, or whose tribe was granted reserved lands in the state. Thirty-three different

tribes are specified in the statute. Twenty-seven are Washington State tribes recognized by the federal government. Five are tribes whose primary tribal boundaries are in neighboring states.

If a Native American student would not otherwise qualify as a resident, but does qualify under this law, the institution cannot count that student as a "state-supported" student for purposes of budgeted enrollment, and no state funds are provided to support that student's education. This law was enacted in 1994.

The Samish Indian Nation has its historic roots in the San Juan Islands of Northwest Washington and has approximately 1,000 members. Between 1969 and 1996, the Samish were not considered a federally-recognized Indian tribe. The tribe regained federal recognition by the U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs on April 9, 1996. The Cowlitz Tribe has its historic origins in Southwest Washington. The approximately 1,500 member tribe was not granted federal recognition until February 14, 2000. The Samish Indian Nation and the Cowlitz Tribe are not currently included in the statutory list of tribes under the law regarding resident tuition for Native American students.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Samish Indian Nation and the Cowlitz Tribe are added to a list of American Indian tribes whose customary and tribal boundaries include portions of Washington, for purposes of making members of the tribes eligible for resident tuition under certain circumstances.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The Cowlitz Tribe is added to the list of tribes whose members qualify for resident tuition under the circumstances outlined in the statute.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This is really a clean-up bill that adds the Samish Indian Nation to the list of other federally-recognized Washington tribes in the statute. The Cowlitz Tribe would also qualify.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Michael Moran, Samish Indian Nation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.